

REVIEW: *A GRAMMAR OF GUÌQIÓNG*

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Jiāng Lì. 2015. *A Grammar of Guìqióng: A Language of Sichuan*. Leiden: Brill. xiv + 452 pp. ISBN 9789004292093 (hardback 213USD) - E-ISBN 9789004293045 (electronic 217USD).

Jiang Li's *A Grammar of Guìqióng* (henceforth, *AGG*) is a revision of her PhD dissertation at the University of Berne under the supervision of George Van Driem.² It is a most welcome contribution to our understanding of this under-described language. The primary dialects of Guìqióng described in *AGG* are spoken in Changma Village of Maibeng Township and Qianxi Village of Qianxi Township, both in Kangding County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. Some praiseworthy aspects of *AGG* include a plethora of examples sentences; a total of about 1500 example sentences are in the book. Included in the list of abbreviations are the linguistic forms from Guìqióng. The inclusion of photographs of the Guìqióng people and their geographic setting adds interest and appeal to the book. Appendix 1 (321-347) contains six texts of "sayings, stories, and recollections."

This review is divided into sections similar to the divisions that the chapters of *AGG* provide: Introduction to *AGG*, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Errata, and Conclusion. Comments on *AGG*'s chapter on pragmatics will be incorporated into the section on syntax since *AGG*'s chapter on pragmatics is very short. Back-matter will also be briefly overviewed in the syntax section.

Gates, Jesse P. 2018. Review: *A Grammar of Guìqióng*. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 51:385-397.

² Except for the title of the book and direct quotes from *A Grammar of Guìqióng*, I have removed all tone marking as I consider it an unnecessary burden for myself and the reader. Consequently, the 'Guìqióng' language will be referred to as 'Guìqiong'.

INTRODUCTION TO *AGG*

Chapter One serves as an introduction to the people, language, geography, and culture of the Guiqiong. Section 1.2 is speculative in its examination of the origins of the ethnonyms, autonoms, and exonyms of the Guiqiong. Sections 1.2-1.4 (on onomastic identity, history, and archaeology) lack adequate citation and referencing.

Section 1.5 (9-10) does a better job citing key sources and helps the reader understand what researchers in the PRC have uncovered regarding the history of the Guiqiong people. Jiang accepts the story of an unbroken connection with the historical usage of the term 'Qiang' and the present 'Rma' speaking language communities that now bear the Minzu designation of Qiang (see 14-15, for example).

There are several enjoyable short passages that give insight into Guiqiong culture and life. However, in describing Guiqiong houses, Jiang describes the first floor and then jumps to the third floor without mentioning the second floor (10).

Some interesting findings on the population and vitality of the Guiqiong language include: "In Qiánxī, a dozen Hàn Chinese villagers have learnt to speak the language due to the fact that local Guìqióng speakers do not speak Chinese" (18). "In the two north towns, Sānhé and Jǐntāng, over 1000 people of Hàn Chinese in [sic] nationality perhaps of Guìqióng origin can still speak the language" (18).

Jiang divides the Guiqiong language community into "listeners" and "speakers" (probably passive vs. active users) and gives numbers that are higher than previous estimates of the population (12,564 listeners; 9,677 speakers). Unfortunately, according to *AGG* the Guiqiong language is disappearing rapidly (18-19).

PHONOLOGY

Guiqiong phonology is the topic of Chapter Three in *AGG*. Jiang's analysis of Guiqiong phonology boasts a consonant inventory of 60 consonant phonemes, eight vowel phonemes, and three tonemes. Two elements that are common in most phonological descriptions are lacking in the phonology chapter. Firstly, no distinctions are made

between loan and native words (Tibetan, Chinese, or native), despite Guiqiong being under heavy influence from Tibetan and Chinese. Secondly, although Jiang discusses the syllable, she does not give a syllable template/canon (58).

Jiang claims that Guiqiong's consonant inventory includes many consonants with a breathy counterpart; the exceptions being bilabial fricatives, laterals, nasals, approximates, retroflex stops, and the glottal fricative. The claim of voiced breathy consonants should include evidence from spectrograms, but unfortunately it does not. Although breathy consonants may be phonetic phenomena, breathy consonants as a phonological category in Guiqiong is suspect with the information provided. Each time there is a breathy voice consonant Jiang claims that it is also followed by a low tone (e.g., 35, 38, 42, 56). She claims that, "[a] breathy voiced syllable always has the low falling tone" (56). This does not seem to be the most economic analysis and is contradictory to accepted principles of phonological analysis.

I suggest two alternative possibilities. The first is to remove the phonological category of breathy voice consonants and make a claim for the existence of a low tone. The second is to make a claim for the phonological category of breathy voice consonants and remove the claim for a low tone. Since the Jiang already has evidence for a low tone phonologically, as will be discussed below, the first suggested alternative analysis (no breathy voice consonants and a low tone) seems the most reasonable. If these breathy consonants can be accounted for by a low phonological tone, Jiang's consonant inventory of Guiqiong can then be reduced by another ten consonants.

In addition, Jiang puts the consonants of high tone syllables that start with *m*, *n*, *l*, *w*, *ŋ*, *ɲ*, *j*, and *ɣ* (marked with an apostrophe; e.g., 'm', 'n', 'l', etc.) as part of her consonant inventory, even though the high tone is already accounted for in her tone analysis. Thus, her consonant inventory should be reduced by another eight consonants, bringing the total number now to forty-two (when including the analysis that removes the additional ten breathy voiced consonants), which seems more plausible from an areal and typological perspective.

The account of breathy consonants and high tone consonants are major errors in the phonological analysis of AGG. At the very least, Jiang can simplify her analysis of the consonant inventory and account

for these additional "consonants" with her tone analysis. Acoustic analysis should be provided to give evidence for tones and for breathy voice consonants. Incidentally, Rao, who has also written a grammar of Guiqiong (2015), has never encountered breathy consonants in her Guiqiong data (pc).

In Guiqiong, each vowel can be nasalized. Jiang also claims that there are diphthongs and triphthongs. There is no justification in *AGG* for why diphthongs are analyzed as such: *teiu* 'what', *dzie* 'eight' and *dziə* 'hundred', *dziə* 'look', *dz'ie* 'consume', *tehyo* 'sit', *χui* 'tooth', *mikue* 'tail', *khue'wu* 'sweet things' or triphthong *tsuwei* 'jump' and *šisuei* 'caress' (24). Why not analyze these as consonant clusters e.g., *te^hj*, *dzi*, *χw*, *kw*, *ts^hw*, etc.? This is not to say that the analysis is wrong in *AGG*, but the analysis warrants justification, especially since from the examples the diphthongs that start with *i* always follow palatals and diphthongs that start with *u* follows velars and uvulars (24). Neither is there justification for why *AGG* includes a distinction between nasalized vowels and velar nasal codas (24). The rest of the section on the vowel phonemes should be commended for providing a good analysis with evidence.

Jiang's analysis of Guiqiong tone is also suspect because tone is predictable based on voicing. Voiceless obstruent initial syllables are always in the high toneme category, voiced obstruent initial syllables are always in the medial toneme category, and breathy initial syllables are always in the low toneme category (54). Are these distinctions only phonetic? Are not the distinctions in voicing what the speakers of Guiqiong use primarily to distinguish minimal contrast? Jiang's analysis does not satisfactorily answer these questions. Using Occam's razor, perhaps it is better to account for tone in Guiqiong with simply two categories (high vs. low), since contrasts with nasals, laterals, approximates, and vowel initial syllables seem to be accounted for best this way.

As mentioned above, it seems most reasonable to account for the so called "breathy" consonants with simply proposing a low tone. Jiang gives evidence for a two tonal category analysis:

[i]n comparison, the three-tone contrast is prominent among syllables with affricate and plosive consonant initials. Syllables with nasal, glides and vowel onsets are distinguished between the high and medial level tone.

Guìqióng initial nasals, glides and vowels are listed below in the two tone names, the high level and the medial level respectively (56).

In addition, Jiang's discussion of a so-called neutral tone is vague, with statements such as, "[t]he neutral tone in Guìqióng sounds very slight and short, similar to the neutral tone in Mandarin" (55).

A far more in-depth analysis of tone in Guìqiong (also of a variety from Maibeng Township) has been conducted by Rao (2015), who devotes an entire chapter (Chapter Three, 69-111) to tone - about five times the pages that Jiang devotes to tone. This does not invalidate the differences that Jiang has found *per se*, as linguistic differences can be found between individuals living in the same village. However, the analysis given by Rao is far more robust than that found in AGG because it includes analyses of tone in monosyllables, disyllables, in the environment of nominal suffixes and clitics, tone in relationship with verbs and their prefixes, and tone sandhi patterns. Jiang, however, only devotes only 8.5 pages to the topic of tone (49-57) and does not discuss how tone works in nouns compared to verbs or what happens to the tonal patterns with affixation.

Jiang is to be commended for her discussion of vowel harmony. Similar to Stau (Gates and Kim 2016 and Forthcoming), Guìqiong has regressive vowel harmony. Among the various manifestations of vowel harmony in Guìqiong, the vowels of the negation prefix *mɛ-* ~ *mə-* ~ *mɛ-* and the prohibitive prefix *thɛ-* ~ *thə-* ~ *thə-* assimilate to the root that they attach to; the vowel being determined by the vowel in the root (front, mid, or back) (59-60). In Stau, the choice of the vowel for the past negation prefix *ma-* ~ *mæ-* is determined by whether the vowel of the root is front *æ* or back *a* (e.g., *mæ-rgæ* 'did not like' vs. *ma-ka* 'no problem'); and the prohibitive triggers vowel harmony in the directional prefix that precedes it (e.g., *ti-ti-jən* 'DIR.AWAY-PROHIB-say', *ni-ti-rtshɪ* 'DIR.DOWN-PROHIB-kick', *ri-ti-ɛə* 'DIR.UP-PROHIB-go', etc.).

MORPHOLOGY

Chapter Three, focusing on morphology, is divided into sections on nominal and verbal morphology. There are subsections that discuss case, which includes grammatical markers such as ablative, ergative, instrumental, illative, genitive/attributive (including a "genitive

nominalizer"), dative, lative, and comparative. There are also subsections on the diminutive, pronouns, demonstratives, and numerals. The data is described well in these subsections.

As do many languages in the Ethnic Corridor, Guiqiong makes a distinction between inclusive and exclusive personal pronouns. The use of a logophoric pronoun, in the case of Guiqiong *wu*, for indirect speech is also common in Ethnic Corridor languages and is discussed with examples for Guiqiong (88).

In Guiqiong, "a genitive nominal can cause ambiguity because it may indicate both possessive and beneficiary" as in the example (1) below, from AGG's example (54) on p71:

- (1) zo 'ɛpɛ-mɛ 'mɔtsɛi-tɕiɛ 'ɲyɛŋ-lɛ
 3S father-GEN cap-CL buy-PF
 'He has bought the cap for his father.'
 or
 'He bought a cap from (my) father.'

In Stau, there is also a genitive and benefactive overlap, as in the following example (2):

- (2) tʰɛ=yə æpæ=ji tɕi kə-v-rə-sə
 3=ERG father=GEN hat PFV-INV-buy-IFR
 'He bought a hat for his father.'
 or
 'He bought his father's hat (from his father).'

In fact, in English, "he bought his father's hat" in certain contexts could mean "he bought a hat for his father" and in other contexts it might mean "he bought a hat from his father." It would be of value to see how many languages have this overlap of ambiguity between genitive and benefactive. The ambiguity seems to lie in whether or not the third argument is considered a truly third argument (oblique) or if it is part of the second argument (with the possessor considered a modifier).

Jiang lists the months of the year (101), but fails to mention that these clearly are borrowings from Tibetan. The forms for the months of the year in Guiqiong are as follows: *dɛŋpu* 'January', *ŋɿpu*

'February', *sɛŋpu* 'March', *zɪpu* 'April', 'ɲəpu 'May', *dzɪpu* 'June', *dɛnpu* 'July', *dziɛpu* 'August', *gɛɪpu* 'September', *tɛɪpu* 'October', *sɛntɕi* 'November', and *dzuɛŋpu/bɛi'lisɛi* 'December'.

In the subsection on verbal morphology, Jiang analyzes and describes Guiqiong bare stem sentences (infinitives); which include expressions of habituality, impending events, and imperatives. The latter are usually just a second person pronoun and a bare stem verb e.g., *nuŋ go* 'You eat!' (106).

Copulas, derivation, directional prefixes, tense, aspect, modality, evidentiality, causatives, negation, adverbs/adverbials, and the instrumental/oblique nominalizer are all discussed in the subsection on Guiqiong verbal morphology. Equational constructions are generally expressed without a copula, but there is also an equational copula *dzi*, which Jiang claims is a borrowing of the Chinese 是 <shì> 'be' (more accurately 'is'), used mostly for emphatic purposes or to answer yes-no questions (107). Guiqiong, like certain other languages of the area - including some Rma languages (LaPolla and Huang 2007) and Stau - has both an animate and inanimate existential copula; and also has a dependent existential verb *bu*, and a negative existential *mẽ*. Guiqiong also has an inchoative copula *ni* (107). Guiqiong distinguishes the age of animate or inanimate arguments with the grammatical morphemes *gẽ* and *ni*, respectively.

Most languages in the area have strategies for incorporating Chinese loan words, and Guiqiong is no exception. The verbs *bɛi* 'do' and *phɔ* 'feel', 'suffer' or 'undergo' can take nominal loans from Chinese and verbalize them. Reduplication is a strategy for creating frequentative semantics (125). One example of verbal triplication is given (example (385) on p125), but very little description is given. Verbal triplication in Guiqiong, and how it compares with Stau (the only other language that has a description of the same phenomena, Gates 2017) remains to be fully explored. Otherwise, good discussion of reduplication in Guiqiong is provided (125-127).

Linguists use various terms to describe grammatical marking that "denotes truth or fact previously unaware or unrevealed to the addressee" (137), e.g., 'mirative' (Delancey 1997), or 'attention marking' (Yliniemi 2016). Jiang uses the term 'gnomic present tense' in her discussion of the morpheme *-wu*. Although Jiang claims that

this gnomic present tense marker -'wu marks new information for the hearer, the following examples (3) and (4) that appear in *AGG* on p137 as examples (437) and (439), respectively, do not appear to be new information in any context (except perhaps when speaking to a child).

- (3) muhi tɕhieŋsi ɕɔ-'wu
 wind often blow-GN
 'It is the case that the wind often blows.'

- (4) ŋeŋ'wuŋ tsui ɕɔ-'wu
 cat mouse catch-GN
 'It is the case that cats catch mice.'

The term 'gnomic' typically is used in linguistic literature to discuss expressions of factual or well-known information. Therefore, Jiang's choice of category being gnomic seems correct, but her prose description of new information seems contradictory. Although all of the examples on pp137-142 could be new information to the speaker, it seems that the examples all have simple fact as a common denominator. Whether or not the information is supposed to be new to the addressee is not explicated through grammatical markings in these examples. Jiang seems to be stretching a bit in her description of -'wu as marking new information, "with a hint that the fact was not previously noted by the addressee" (150).

A similar problem is found with Jiang's analysis of -'wudzi as a 'gnomic potential mood marker'. The morpheme -'wu is clearly the same gnomic suffix as in examples (3) and (4). According to Jiang, -'wudzi marks information that "according to the speaker, is previously unknown to the addressee" (251). However, examples (5) and (6) from examples 1032 and 1033 in *AGG* (251), seem to be prospective aspect for matter-of-fact statements.

- (5) ɕeŋ tɕhimu wu-tɕhiu ɕeŋ tsuŋ khi-'wu dzi
 iron outside DIR-put CON rust get-GN COP
 'A piece of iron will get rusty if it is put outside.'

- (6) sɛnpu ji-tshɔ̌ gɛŋ dɛ-'wu dʒi
 tree DIR-sow CON big-GN COP
 'Once a tree is planted, it will grow big.'

It is hard to imagine that an adult would not know that "a piece of iron will get rusty if it is left outside," or that "a tree will grow big after it has been planted." The label "gnomic potential" is correct; the statement that this is "unknown to the addressee" seems highly suspect. Rao's (2015 and pc, 2017) analysis is much simpler and more persuasive. According to Rao's analysis, -'wu is a nominalizer and dʒi is a copula. Analyzing -'wu as a nominalizer seems to be a better analysis for AGG's 'gnomic present tense' and 'gnomic potential mood marker' (as in examples 3-6 above).

The discussion of the agentive nominalizer is convincing, but the tense subsection seems like an odd place to put this discussion.

Guiqiong has a variety of post-verbal markers to indicate various kinds of aspect: progressive, perfective, dynamic perfective, and static perfective, dependent perfective, perfective with volition, and momentaneous aspect. There are also numerous auxiliaries, modality markers, and modal verbs.

There is a thorough analysis and description of a circumstantial marker -lu, (198-206). There is also a fine description of an optative construction (247-248), marked with the suffix -ku 'CAUS2', although I question whether the term 'optative' is best suited as a label for these constructions. For example, see (7) and (8) below:

- (7) z'ei wu-go ji-ku
 food DIR-eat go-CAUS2
 'You go and get her to eat food.'
- (8) zo wu-'nyɛŋ ji-ku
 3s DIR-buy go-CAUS2
 'You go and get him to buy (some wine).'

In my view, the term 'optative' is used for 'if only' constructions, and examples (7) and (8) do not reflect this (at least in the free translation). Since these constructions are marked with a causative suffix *-ku* 'CAUS2', examples (7) and (8) seem to be causative constructions.

Evidential constructions include, "the experienced auditory evidential marker *-tsimu*, the gnomic auditory evidential marker *-tsi'wu*, the visual evidential marker *-su'wu* and the speculative mood marker *-əmu*-" (248).

The visual evidential marker *-su'wu* and the speculative mood marker *-əmu*- (more likely *ə- mu*-) are well discussed. Guiqiong, like Stau, has a speculative particle *pe* (in Stau *ba*), that Jiang claims is borrowed from Mandarin 吧 <ba> (258). I speculate that the Stau speculative *ba* comes also from Chinese (Sichuanese in particular), and it would be interesting to see how many languages in the Sichuan Ethnic Corridor (and elsewhere in China) have this form with a similar function.

SYNTAX

Chapter Four on syntax and Chapter Five on pragmatics are both brief (forty-two pages in total). Chapter Four discusses coordinate, subordinate, complement, and relative clauses; and also gives an analysis of indirect vs. direct speech, serial verb constructions, and basic word order. Chapter Five discusses new versus old information, topic-comment constructions, and focus presupposition constructions.

The discussion of complement clauses is too short and there is not enough explanation of the variation between different complement

clauses in terms of their morphosyntactic behavior and semantics (291-292). It would be interesting to see if Guìqióng has hybrid direct (or semi-direct speech) in addition to direct and indirect speech as described (292-293).

Following Chapter Five, there is an appendix with an Guìqióng-English glossary and also an appendix with an English-Guìqióng glossary. Bibliographic references are followed by an index at the end.

ERRATA

Numerous typos and other errors detract from the quality of *AGG*. These oversights are contrary to the quality promised by a publisher such as Brill, and include the following:

- p 1, "was given at the beginning of the book" should read "will be given in this chapter"
- p 5, awkward: "where Dìjiǎohuà denotes a language spoken in wild field corners remote from centres of political administration"
- p 7, "The later findings of the cognate connection between Mùyǎ and the lost Tangut added to the source study that the Míngzhèng Tǔsī might have been post-Xìxià Tangut by descent (1994)." No name is given in the citation here or previously in the paragraph
- p 10, "Guìqióng men wear blue cloth turban. Women wear shorter turban and apron" should read "Guìqióng men wear blue cloth turbans. Women wear shorter turbans and aprons"
- pp 11 and 14, Jiang repeatedly uses "Qiangic" when "Qiang" would be better (although that term should in fact be replace with Rma)
- p 14, "A rich store of agricultural glossary" would read better as "A rich lexicon of agricultural terms"
- p 14, "Guìqióng mainly practices monogamy in marriage and family" should read "Guìqióng mainly practices monogamy"
- p. 14 "their forefathers removed to" should read "their forefathers moved to"
- p 15, "these Hàn surnames may have longer history than it was assumed" should read "these Hàn surnames may have a longer history than it was assumed"

- p 15, "and a series of complex procedure" should read "and a series of complex complex procedures"
- p 15, what are "prayer agregations"?
- p 16, "and the Tibetan Buddhism" should read "and Tibetan Buddhism"
- p 31, "voimit" should read "vomit"
- p 98, example (205), *ni* should be glossed 'two' and not 'one'

At times Jiang's writing is unclear. For example:

[t]he emphatic marker *-ni* indicating a case aberrant from or transcendent over an average standard might have been evolved from the ablative case marker *-ni*, which denotes the place, e.g. (16)-(19)... (65).

Firstly, this "emphatic marker" was not described for the reader. Secondly, what does "indicating a case aberrant from or transcendent over an average standard" mean?

Some sentences need redrafting since they are virtually indecipherable, e.g.:

- p 14, "detailed names of various part of a tilled field, and specified names of various parts of earliest tilling device"
- p 16, "the Guìqióng priest or shaman, which has been an important part of Guìqióng traditional culture with mysterious springhead"
- p 31, "the uvular /χ/ is a voiceless fricative a bit backward than the Mandarin velar /x/ and forward than the glottal /h/"

Brill should have sent *AGG* through at least one final round of editing before publishing.

CONCLUSION

AGG betters our understanding of the structure of the Guiqiong language. Guiqiong culture and language is highly threatened, a fact that motivated AGG. However, as has been highlighted earlier, there are many errors and problematic analyses throughout AGG. I recommend that the author, editors, and publisher consider these issues and take whatever action is necessary to rectify them. Writing a grammar of a language is no small task, and Jiang should be commended for her comprehensive analysis and description.

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